

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 037024
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY -

APPROVED BY 2/10/78

S/S-O:TMARTIN

-----125152 111100Z /13

O 111027Z PEB 78 ZFF6

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 037024

EXDIS DIST. AS NODIS

WH FOR BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 AND 2

TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, IS, SY, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE MILITARY SITUATION

1. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN BY NOW REPORT THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS OF ISRAELI ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION, INDICATING THAT, IF HEAVIER FIGHTING IN BEIRUT BEGAN TO LEAD TO "A MASSACRE" OF THE CHRISTIANS, THE ISRAELIS MIGHT HAVE TO INTERVENE, NOT EXCLUDING POSSIBILITY OF INTERVENTION IN NORTH. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED WITH REPORT THAT PHALANGE PARTY MEMBERS, KNOWN TO HAVE HAD CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELIS, MAY HAVE BEEN EGGING ON THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO ADOPT A MORE AGGRESSIVE MILITARY ATTITUDE

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TOWARDS THE SYRIANS. WHILE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, THE SYRIAN LEADERS, AND THE CHRISTIAN MARONITE LEADERSHIP APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO CALM THE SITUATION, THE RANK AND FILE WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS AND PERHAPS WITHIN THE SYRIAN ARMY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO STIR UP FURTHER TROUBLES. WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN TO KEEP THE SITUATION

FROM GETTING OUT OF CONTROL ACCIDENTALLY.

2. FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY: IN YOUR MEETING WITH KHADDAM, PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE SYRIAN LEADERS TO GET THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. WE RECOGNIZE THERE HAVE BEEN PROVOCATIONS AND DEPLORE THE DEATHS THAT HAVE OCCURRED.

-- URGE SYRIA TO EXERCISE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE RESTRAINT AT THIS TIME, EVEN IN THE FACE OF NEW INCIDENTS, TENSIONS, OR PROVOCATIONS WHICH WILL INEVITABLY OCCUR.

-- OUR CONCERN IS THAT THERE ARE PERSONS WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, ALTHOUGH NOT THE PRINCIPAL LEADERS, WHO ARE DETERMINED TO STIR UP TROUBLE, HOPING THAT THE CONFLICT WILL WIDEN. THESE PERSONS MAY INCLUDE SOME WHO WANT TO SEE LEBANON PARTITIONED. SOME OF THEM MAY BE HOPING TO DRAW IN THE ISRAELIS. THERE ARE ALSO TROUBLE-MAKING PEOPLE IN LEBANON WHO WANT TO TARNISH THE EXCELLENT PROGRESS THE SYRIANS HAVE MADE IN RESTORING SECURITY TO MOST OF THE COUNTRY.

-- WE WERE SURPRISED BY PRESS STORIES THAT PRESIDENT ASSAD HAD INDICATED THAT LEBANON'S NEW NATIONAL ARMY SHOULD BE DISBANDED. WE ASSUME THESE STORIES ARE INACCURATE OR
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PAGE 03 STATE 037024

DISTORTED, SINCE WE HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT SYRIA HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE REESTABLISHMENT OF LEBANON'S ARMY AS A MEANS OF ASSURING STABILITY OVER THE LONG RUN AND HAD WELCOMED U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

3. FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS: YOU SHOULD ALSO GET IN TOUCH WITH APPROPRIATE ISRAELI OFFICIALS TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- THE U.S. AND ISRAELI APPRAISALS OF THE SITUATION AGREE IN THE SENSE THAT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT LEADERS, SYRIAN LEADERS, AND THE MAJOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS APPEAR TO WANT TO CALM THE SITUATION. WE SHOULD GIVE THESE EFFORTS EVERY CHANCE TO SUCCEED.

-- DESCRIBE THE EFFORTS WE HAVE BEEN MAKING IN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS.

-- EXPLAIN THAT WE HAVE A REPORT THAT CERTAIN LEBANESE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE ISRAELIS ARE

URGING THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO TAKE A MORE AGGRESSIVE MILITARY STANCE AGAINST THE SYRIANS. THIS IS AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS DEVELOPMENT, SINCE IT MAY LEAD MANY LEBANESE TO BEHAVE RECKLESSLY, ASSUMING THAT ISRAEL WILL COME TO THEIR AID.

-- WE RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S CONCERN FOR THE FATE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON. WE BELIEVE THIS CONCERN MAY BEST BE MANIFESTED BY ASSISTING IN KEEPING THE LID ON THE PROBLEM. WE URGE, THEREFORE, THAT ISRAEL TAKE NO PRECIPITATE ACTION WHILE WE SEEK TO CALM THE SITUATION THROUGH REPRESENTATIONS IN BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, AND JIDDA.

-- IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THERE BE NO SURPRISES FROM THE ISRAELI SIDE. WE SHOULD, THEREFORE, REMAIN IN CLOSE SECRET

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TOUCH.

4. FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER: CONTINUE YOUR EFFORTS TO DISCOURAGE THE MILITANTS AMONG THE CHRISTIANS FROM RECKLESS ACTIONS WHICH COULD THROW LEBANON INTO CHAOS AGAIN.

5. FOR AMBASSADOR WEST: YOU SHOULD REVIEW WITH THE SAUDIS PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON. EXPLAIN IN GENERAL TERMS THAT WE ARE CONSULTING WITH THE LEBANESE, SYRIANS, AND ISRAELIS, BUT DO NOT GO INTO THE TALKING POINT DETAILS OUTLINED ABOVE. THEN MAKE THE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS:

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-- WE BELIEVE THE SAUDIS WOULD AGREE THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS POSE GREAT DANGERS FOR THE REGION AND COULD INTERRUPT THE EFFORTS BEING MADE, WITH SAUDI SUPPORT, TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

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TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 037024

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 037024, SENT BEIRUT DAMASCUS TEL AVIV
JIDDA INFO AMMAN CAIRO WHITE HOUSE 11 FEB:

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 037024

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VANCE UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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S E C R E T STATE 037024

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 037024 ACTION JERUSALEM FEB 11.

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 037024

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 037024, SENT BEIRUT DAMASCUS TEL AVIV

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VANCE UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER UNQUOTE HABIB

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CAT-B, CHRISTIANS, INTERVENTION
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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
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Litigation History:
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
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TAGS: MOPS, PEPR, IS, LE, SA, SY, PEPR
To: BEIRUT DAMASCUS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/45c221cf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014